

# Children and Education Select Committee

17 November 2017

## Update on Short Breaks Re-commissioning Action Plan



**Purpose of report:** To scrutinise progress in mobilising new short breaks services in Surrey and implementation of identified actions in the agreed Short Breaks Service Development Action Plan.

### Introduction:

1. High-quality, locally delivered short breaks make a huge difference to over 2,200 children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in Surrey each year. Short breaks enable children and young people to achieve better outcomes by having fun, seeing their friends and trying new activities, whilst also giving families a much needed break from caring. Alongside this, Surrey County Council (SCC) has a range of statutory duties and responsibilities that it needs to fulfil in relation to short breaks provision.
2. On 18 July 2017, Surrey County Council's Cabinet approved the award of a range of new contracts and grants for short breaks services, to begin on 1 December 2017. These recommendations were the result of an extensive re-commissioning project which began in January 2016. This project aimed to achieve better outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families, through to co-designing a new short breaks offer with local families (an overview of the project timeline can be seen in Annex 1).
3. The committee's predecessor, the Social Care Service Board, scrutinised the approach to re-commissioning short breaks on 20 January 2017, prior to the Cabinet decision. It was noted at the time that the Board "strongly supports the approach taken to commissioning short breaks, and notes the endorsement of Ofsted in its approach to co-design with families".
4. Alongside the recommendations for contract and grant award, Cabinet also endorsed a set of actions, captured in a Short Breaks Service Development Action Plan. These included both the key priorities for the effective mobilisation of the new short breaks offer, as well as the Council's proposed response to a number of key areas of feedback from families during the process about their wider experience of short breaks in Surrey.
5. Since Cabinet's decision, the Council's Short Breaks, Market Strategy, Quality and Experience, and Procurement Teams have been working closely together to prepare for the start of the new offer on 1 December and implement the actions identified in the agreed action plan. The purpose of this report is to provide the Select Committee with an update on progress with implementing these actions to date, as short breaks continue to be a key area of focus for the Council.
6. Select Committee Members are encouraged to read the 18 July Cabinet report, which includes detailed background information about the re-commissioning process that

Surrey County Council has undertaken, the extensive engagement with children, young people, families and partners, and the specific recommendations that Cabinet approved.

## **Update on Short Breaks Service Development Action Plan**

### **Summary of progress to date**

7. An updated version of the Short Breaks Service Development Action Plan has been included as Annex 2 to this report. This includes a short assessment of progress for each action and highlights where the action is on track or the action is in progress, but current progress mean the action will take longer to achieve than originally planned. For these “in progress” actions a short assessment of the likely impact on delivery of the project in each case has also been included.
8. Of the 29 actions identified in the Action Plan, 24 are currently “on track” and 5 are “in progress”, but looking as though they will take longer to complete than originally planned. Of the five that are “in progress” three will have a low impact, one will have a medium impact and one has a potentially high impact for a small number of affected families.

### **Overview of progress with mobilisation of the new services**

9. The Short Breaks and Market Strategy Teams have been undertaking a programme of contract mobilisation meetings with all providers that Cabinet has awarded contracts and grants for delivery of short breaks from 1 December 2017. The purpose of these meetings has been to set the direction for the newly commissioned services, clarify delivery proposals for each provider, highlight specific questions or concerns that families have raised during the engagement process, and iron-out any issues that providers have identified in relation to mobilising their new services. As at the 13 October 2017, the Short Breaks Team had held 21 mobilisation meetings, with meetings for some remaining established providers of smaller grants scheduled in during the second half of October and November.
10. At these meetings, the team has given a clear message that 1 December 2017 represents the start of a new commission. This means there are new priorities and service requirements that have been co-designed with families, including a clear focus on the outcomes that services enable children, young people and families to achieve. In particular we have highlighted the key issues that families have told us about during the process. Although the re-commissioning process has meant change for a number of providers, they have responded positively to these messages and are now seeing this as an opportunity to move on and develop their services in line with what families have told us.
11. The particular priorities, based largely on family feedback, that we have communicated to providers include:
  - a) Developing a standard approach to measuring outcomes achieved;
  - b) The need to ensure children and young people with a wide range of needs can access provision, in particular those with complex health needs and behaviours that challenge – including ensuring that the appropriate training is in place for staff;

- c) Requiring providers to work together well to manage any transitions for families where services are changing and transition of young people to Adult Social Care;
  - d) Delivering services as locally as possible in each borough and district or having clear proposals to minimise transport as a barrier for families; and
  - e) The need for providers to collectively revisit their booking systems to improve consistency and transparency for families.
12. So far we have met with all providers who have been awarded contracts for play and leisure and/or overnight short breaks, where the majority of the Council's investment is being made, with a programme of meetings with organisations who are delivering innovation grants also underway. Remaining meetings with a small number of established, grant funded provider will be completed during October and November.
  13. As well as individual meetings with providers, the team has also have been facilitating meetings between providers in areas of most change and drawn together a specific working group of new providers to develop our standard approach to outcomes measurement. The team held a launch event with all providers delivering the new commissions event on 16 October. This event enabled the Short Breaks and Market Strategy Teams to set a clear direction for providers, as well as highlight and agree the new approach to outcomes monitoring that we will be rolling out to all providers from 1 December.
  14. Based on work to date, we are confident that all providers will be in position to start their planned new delivery as commissioned from 1 December. Please note that for some providers the planned approach means they will be focussing their delivery at particular points of the year (for example, Easter or summer holidays).
  15. There are two actions related to mobilisation that are identified as "in progress" in the Service Development Action Plan (Annex 2), where original timescale set out to Cabinet has been revised. Both of these changes will have a low impact on the delivery of the project.

### **Overview of progress with identified areas for service development**

16. Alongside actions related to effective contract mobilisation, there are also a range of actions that are related to wider service development within short breaks. These were in response to feedback from families received during the recommissioning process. This section summarises progress against some of these priorities, although a more specific update against each action is provided in Annex 2. As part of its overall response these, Surrey County Council has initiated a service improvement project, which is being supported by colleagues from the new Quality and Experience Team, working alongside the Short Breaks Team.
17. One of the key issues that families told us about was that Surrey County Council's information about short breaks was not easy to find and sometimes difficult to understand. In response to this we are:
  - a) Redesigning and updating our Short Breaks Statement, drawing on best practice examples and focus groups with families, to ensure it is clear and understandable, as well as developing different approaches for different audiences;
  - b) Re-drafting our short breaks service directory and working with the Family Information Service to ensure that the short breaks information on the Council's Local Offer website is accessible and clear – further work is planned with Family Voice Surrey to engage families in reviewing and improving information further;

- c) We are holding drop-in sessions for families during October and November, to provide an opportunity for providers to talk to families about their services;
  - d) We have been working with providers to ensure they have a clear approach to engaging and communicating with families, particularly in areas of change; and
  - e) We are reviewing the way we communicate social care assessment processes to families, to ensure these are clear, transparent and straightforward.
18. The action to re-draft the short breaks directory is well underway, but we have needed to revise the timescale we put before Cabinet in July. This will have a low impact on the project delivery. This change will allow for additional time to respond to family feedback and make sure it is comprehensive, covering the full offer of all providers.
19. Families also highlighted how they were concerned about the ability of providers to manage complex health needs or challenging behaviour. In response to this we are:
- a) Confirming with all providers that they are providing adequate training to their staff to enable them to support children and young people with a range of needs or agreeing approaches to strengthen training where needed; and
  - b) Developing proposals for a joint-funded nurse trainer role with Health, to provide support and training to settings and build parental confidence.
20. The action to appoint a joint-nurse trainer role is in progress, but we are awaiting a final confirmation of Guildford and Waverley CCG's agreement, so we can formally begin recruiting. This final confirmation has taken more time than anticipated. Whilst we are confident in the new providers' ability to meet more complex needs, we know that the establishment of the nurse trainer was a necessary step to build parental confidence, so we are actively seeking confirmation from the CCG.
21. The decision by Surrey and Borders NHS Foundation Partnership Trust not to bid to continue to provide residential short breaks at Beeches in Reigate was another issue that has had a significant impact on a relatively small number of families, who really valued the support they received from this service. To reflect the significance of this change a specific action was set out in the Service Development Action Plan to ensure families are offered alternative provision that meets their assessed needs. Good progress has been made with this for most of the families who are currently making accessing Beeches, but we are still working to agree future packages for 2 families. This remains a top priority for the Children with Disabilities Teams, realising how vital this support is to families, so they continue to work with affected families to find the best solution from the range of available provision.

<p><b>Conclusions:</b></p>
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22. Overall, good progress is being made to mobilise the new services from 1 December 2017 and with implementing on the identified actions to support service development. The robustly planned approach to contract mobilisation and establishment of a new service improvement project have both been key factors in the progress that has been made.
23. We have highlighted to Select Committee the specific actions where we have needed to revise the original timescales and are clear what needs to happen to prioritise and secure solutions to these.
24. We are looking forward to implementing the new short breaks offer from 1 December and remain confident that the services we have put in place, alongside the areas for

service development that we are addressing, will enable us to provide children, young people and families with a strong offer that enables them to achieve better outcomes.

**Recommendations:**

25. It is recommended that:

- a) The Short Breaks, Market Strategy and Quality and Experience Teams continue with implementing the actions set out in the Short Breaks Service Development Action Plan, with a particular focus on the five actions that have been identified as in progress, but where deadlines have been revised; and
- b) A brief update report is brought to the Children's and Education Select Committee in May 2017, to feedback on first four months of the new commission from December 2017 to March 2018, and a fuller report following the first full financial year of the new services (April 2018-March 2019) in May 2019.

**Next steps:**

In addition to the recommendations above, specific next steps are details in the Short Breaks Service Development Action Plan (Annex 2).

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**Sources/background papers:**

- Cabinet Report, Recommendations for award of contracts and grants for short breaks in Surrey, 18 July 2017
- Cabinet Report, Short Breaks for Disabled Children, 24 May 2016
- Cabinet Report, Re-commissioning Short Breaks for Disabled Children, 22 November 2016
- Cabinet Member Report, Proposals for Public Engagement on Outcome of Short Breaks Procurement Process, 21 April 2017

Annex 1

Short breaks re-commissioning - Project timeline (October 2017)

Review of specialist short breaks and needs analysis (Jan-Apr 2016)  
 Cabinet Report (24 May 2016)

 Key decision

